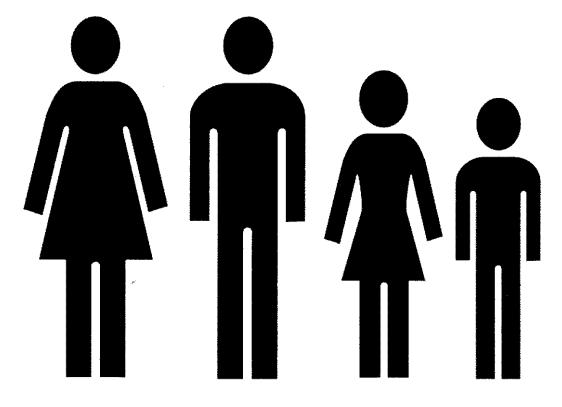
Low-Income Fathers



and Fragile Families

Joseph T. Jones Jr.

President/CEO

The Center for Fathers, Families and Workforce Development





Table of Contents

Course Facilitator Overview	3
Program Overview/Agenda	4
Group Introductions and Expectations	5
Key Components and Things to Consider When Starting a Responsible Fatherhood Program	6
Key Characteristics of the Population to be Served	8
Outreach: Critical Rationale	9
Don't Take No for an Answer	10
Terms and Definitions	12
Great Programs Aren't Enough	13
Removing Barriers Prior to Addressing Employment Needs	14
The Child Support Process	15
Group Assignment	16
Case Study: How to Handle Employment, Child Support and Other Challenges	17
Peer Support Groups	19
Mock Peer Support Group	20
Observation Sheet	20
Introduction to Fragile Families	21
Types of Fragile Families	22
What's Your Reaction?	23
"IALAC"	24
In the Best Interest of Children	27
The Need for 50/50 Parenting	29
The Why's and How's of Parenting Agreements	30
Planning for Change	31
Additional Resources and Materials	32
The Fatherhood Field: A Brief History	33
Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network: Research and Resources Sections	51



Course Facilitator Overview

Biographical Sketch of Joseph T. Jones, Jr.

Joseph T. Jones, Jr., founder of Men's Services and founder, president and CEO of CFWD, is a national leader in programming for men and fathers. He is a community advisor on fatherhood issues to former Vice President Al Gore.

Through his professional and civic involvement, Mr. Jones influences policy direction nationwide. Mr. Jones served on President Bill Clinton's Work Group on Welfare Reform, the congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference, and the United States Agency for International Development's delegation to Jamaica. He is a board member for the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families, Inc. (NPNFF) and a committee member for the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL). He is also a board member of the Open Society Institute – Baltimore. Mr. Jones has ongoing relationships with research and policy agencies, such as NPCL, the National Center on Fathers and Families (NCOFF), Center of Father, Families and Public Policy (CFFPP), the National Fatherhood Initiative (NJI) and the Urban Institute.

A lifelong resident of Baltimore, Mr. Jones is married and the father of three children.



Program Overview/Agenda

Getting Started and Setting the Stage

- Official Welcome and Video
- Program Overview
- Brief History of the Fatherhood Initiative
- Group Introductions and Expectations
- Ice Breaker: "Characteristics of the Population to be Served"

Break

Outreach, Retention and Employment

- Worst-Case Strategy Moves to Best-Demonstrated Practice
- Article, "Don't Take No for an Answer"
- Discussion: "Great Programs Aren't Enough"
- Video "48 Hours"
- Retention
- Removing Barriers for Employment
- The Child Support Process

Lunch

Outreach, Retention and Employment (continued)

- Group Discussion: "Helping Dad Manage Child Support"
- Case Study: "How to Handle Employment, Child Support and Other Challenges"
- Video Clip "Hardworking Families"

Break

Peer Support

- Peer Support Overview
- Mock Peer Support Group

Fragile Families and Low Income Couples

- Exploring the Issues and Challenges
- Video Clip "Save the Last Dance"
- "IALAC" Story
- 50/50 Parenting Overview

Summary and Wrap-up Activities

- Questions and Answers
- Evaluation

Adjourn



Group Introductions and Expectations

Let's take a few moments to get acquainted by sharing.



- 1. Your name
- 2. Your related work experience
- 3. Your expectations: "What is your goal, hope or concern for today's session?"

Key Components and Things to Consider When Starting a Responsible Fatherhood Program

Providing support services to low-income fathers is a relatively new practice within social science. Generally speaking, the following list contains specific examples of *Key Components and Considerations* to consider when starting a Responsible Fatherhood Program.

1. Assessing the Environment Where Services are to be Delivered

- Does existing staff have a clear understanding of who will be served (low-income fathers)?
- How might this added dimension conflict with current services?
- Who should be included in the planning stage?
- Is staff training necessary to help facilitate a smooth transition?

2. Staffing

- What organizational structure is needed to start a program?
- What attributes should be considered when hiring staff?
- What type of training should be considered for new staff?

3. Designing and Planning for Services (Basic Features of an Effective Responsible Fatherhood Program)

- Conduct focus groups with population to be served.
- Where appropriate, include aspects of focus group findings in program design.
- Identify realistic number of fathers to be served.
- Determine effective hours of operation.
- Develop outreach and recruitment strategies.



4. Key Components of a Start-Up Program

- Client enrollment
- Client assessment
- · Client and program goals
- Peer support group
- · Curriculum/parenting education group
- Incentives: meals, culturally relevant activities, etc...

5. Typical Barriers to Services Requested or Needed by Participants

- Employment
- Education
- Drug treatment
- Child support
- Legal
- Co-parenting (including access and visitation)
- Obtaining government-issued identification
- · Healing relationship with own father
- Other

Note: Start-up programs will often need to create partnerships/linkages with other providers to effectively address some of these issues.



Key Characteristics of the Population to be Served

Small Group Brainstorming

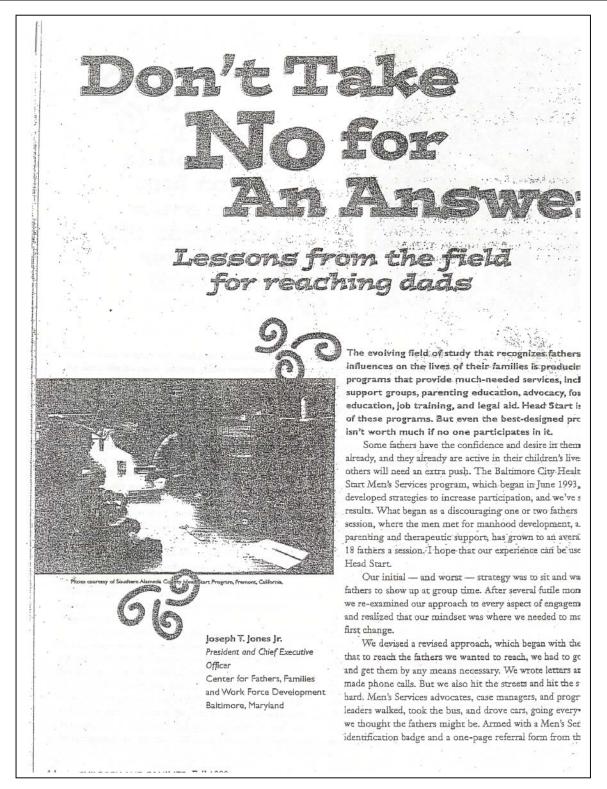
The characte	ristics of t	he populat	tion to be s	served.	

Outreach: Critical Rationale

- Even great services do not attract needy people to come to you.
- Those who need services have reasons for not leaving the area where they live (geographical barriers).
- It takes a special set of skills to reach out to people who would never ordinarily come in contact with the services provided.
- People have myths and fears that keep them from participating (emotional barriers) in programs that can help them.
- Outreach is a process for meeting people where they are ...over and over again.



Don't Take No for an Answer



Article, page 2

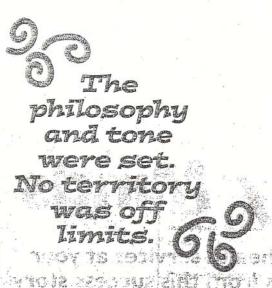




Photo courtesy of the Third Church Head Start, Rochester, N

mother's case management team (containing information on the father like his name, address, phone numbers, and best contact times), plus a "bail bondsman's mentality," we went out to gettour men.

The philosophy and tone were set. No territory was off limits. We went to homes, schools, and basketball courts. And we went to alleys, crack houses, and Narcotics Anonymous meetings. As we began to build our core group of participants, the fathers, themselves, also began to help our outreach endeavors. Eventually, we were able to obtain a 15-passenger van to intensify our recruitment efforts.

We then developed an outreach protocol for transportation. Each father involved in the program is assigned a Men's Services Advocate. During the morning on each group day, the advocate calls every father on his caseload to arrange's time for pick-up. Advocates go to a home in person if the father doesn't have phone service. The van driver has a cellular phone and a pager, so he can be notified if a father calls to be picked up. This transportation strategy, coupled with activities that often include the children, allowed us to increase participation dramatically.

As you must already know, this was not easy. It was a labor-intensive process and it took a special and dedicated staff. Repeated attempts sometimes were needed just to reach one father. One father, for example, refused to be involved in the program. He wouldn't answer the door when we knocked, and sometimes he pecked through the curtains and went out the back door. After seven or eight tries, we made our last effort to enroll him. A newly enrolled client was with the staff, and he recognized the reluctant father as a friend. This client yelled

up to his friend and, noticing a familiar voice and face, the father joined us in the van. He's been a regular particever since. Believe me, there is no greater feeling than en a father who has ducked you for weeks and then watching grow as a man and responsible father.

Traditionally, programs like Healthy Start and Head have the infrastructures to strategically and systematically out to fathers and families to improve the lives of the chil served by those programs. Staff members who typically we with mothers often have a rapport with them. With this relationship of trust, the women often feel comfortable ic fying the fathers of their babies. Activities for mothers and children then can be enhanced by inviting fathers and oth significant males to attend. Special "Dads Only" activities be created to provide a climate where fathers feel at ease environment that is all too often considered a place for w and children only. But this outreach will only happen if the philosophical mindset is in place.

Now is the time to invest in developing outreach and integrating it into our efforts to reach the people who init may not want to be reached, the fathers of our children. Getting in the right frame of mind was crucial to doing the successfully with Men's Services, and it could be an equal crucial first step for Head Start. CSF

Jöseph T. Jones Jr. is the president and chief executive officer of Center for Fathers, Families and Work Force Development in Baltimore, Maryland, which operates the Men's Services Progr Baltimore City Healthy Start. He is an advisor on fatherhood: to Vice President Albert Gore.

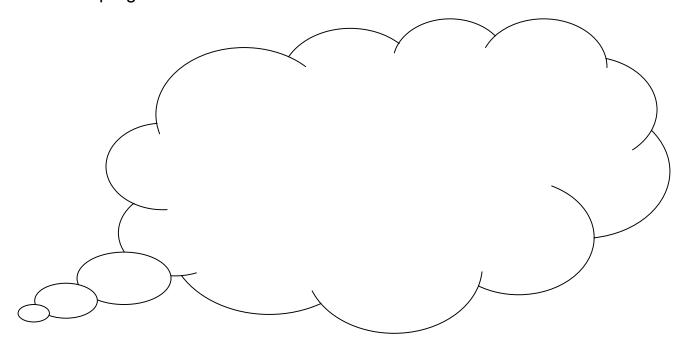
Terms and Definitions

Outreach			
to	,	used b	y practitioners and
Fragile Fami	ly		
Used to describ mothers and the		, never	fathers,
Retention			
Anyto		used b	and

Great Programs Aren't Enough

There are a few great programs being offered to provide the muchneeded services for fathers, including education, job training and legal aid. But even the best-designed program isn't worth much if no one participates in it.

Brainstorm a list of program activities and incentives that build excitement, interest and encourage participants to get involved and stay active in a program.



Video Clip - "48 Hours"

CBS, with host Dan Rather, produced an investigative news magazine program called "48 Hours." In June 1997, the show focused on fathers "missing in action." Select video clips reinforce the special challenges and unique creativity that goes into successfully recruiting and retaining participants.



Removing Barriers Prior to Addressing Employment Needs

Identify likely barriers faced by dad.



The Child Support Process

Generally speaking, how does a low-income, non-custodial father become involved with the child support system?

- Couple meets, develops a relationship and conceives a child.
- Mom needs health care. She also needs food and shelter for herself and the unborn child.
- Mom visits the welfare office.
- The welfare office requires information from mom about dad as a condition for benefits.
- The welfare office attempts to contact dad.
- A letter is sent and a hearing date is established.
- Following the hearing, a child-support order is established.
- Dad is now responsible for child support.



Group Assignment

Assess and analyze the client situation. Consider ways you can successfully recruit and retain this client in your program.

Small Group Assignment

In your assigned group, complete the following:

- 1. Discuss the client situation.
- 2. Assess and analyze the situation.
- 3. Be prepared to share your thinking with the rest of the class.

How did you assess and analyze the situation?
List your ideas on how to handle the situation effectively.



Case Study: How to Handle Employment, Child Support and Other Challenges

You work at a community-based organization primarily serving women and children. This involves handling transitional housing, employment services, medical services and domestic violence. Larry presents himself to you for services. His most pressing issue is to make money and get a job so he can take care of his baby.

Larry is 22. He met Brenda when she was 18, and they became romantically involved. Their baby was born when Brenda turned 19. They did not become engaged or plan to marry. The stress associated with the birth of the child was more than Larry could handle, and they are not spending time together.

Larry's background includes a ninth-grade education, low-income jobs and unemployment situations. He has no positive male support relationships. These factors strained his relationship with Brenda, and they stopped seeing each other. While Larry is deeply committed to the baby, he is somewhat less connected to Brenda.

To receive benefits, Brenda applied for welfare services. She was required to identify Larry as the father allowing the system to collect money from Larry for the benefits that Brenda and the baby received.

Larry looked for employment; however, his limited marketing skills left him unable to find employment at a meaningful wage. He was unable to meet his child support payments. Struggling to provide for his child/family, he became involved in illegal activities to make money. He was arrested, convicted and incarcerated. He served two years.

Child support accrued while Larry has in prison leaving him with about \$10,000 in arrearages when he was released.



Larry received information about your program, and comes to you for support services as a low-income, non-custodial dad. His most pressing issue is to make money, get a job and take care of his baby. He is not sure about his relationship with Brenda.

How would you approach this situation? Consider ...

- Assessment of his situation
- Child support relationship
- Modification of child support
- Larry's frustration

During discussions with Larry, he says,

"Listen, I just got out of jail, and I don't want to deal with child support right now. I owe this money but I got no way to pay it back. I just don't want to go back to jail."

How do you handle this?

Video Clip – "Hardworking Families"

The video, "Hardworking Families," was produced by the State of Maryland, Department of Human Resources. The video portion shown looks at a family that overcame issues of substance abuse, unemployment, child support and family formation/marriage.



Peer Support Groups

Peer support groups typically consist of ...

- · Like individuals with similar backgrounds
- Individuals coming together in a particular setting
- Group members addressing issues of concern

Group members don't typically have any other social support network to help with their issues, and the peer support group is a vehicle to help them disclose issues and identify positive ways to address them.

Mock Peer Support Group

- Identify group participants
- Establish group rules
- Conduct group and encourage observation
- Feedback and discussion

	Observation Sheet	
>	How did the facilitator engage group members?	
>	How were group rules established?	
>	How did group members and the facilitator encourage participat from all members?	tion
>	Identify the purpose of the opening and closing rituals.	

Introduction to Fragile Families

In 1997, as a part of the Ford Foundation's Strengthening Fragile Families Initiative (SFFI), Baltimore City Healthy Start (BCHS) was awarded a grant to assist in the design and development of a "Team Parenting" curriculum and program. The goal, of what would become the 50/50 Parenting Program, was to develop an initiative that would enhance the ability of low-income parents to parent jointly regardless of their romantic situation. This strategy was pursued to enhance and expand the services available to low-income families.

As the program development process progressed a key finding emerged. Traditional interventions that focused solely on mothers and children, rarely provided services for fathers or created an environment to support a "team approach" to parenting. Compounding these deficiencies, there were few community role models who could provide positive examples of team parenting behavior for the parents in a fragile family.

To ensure the vision of "team parenting" among low-income parents is realized a program model has been developed along with a male and female curriculum.

Two concepts under gird the 50/50 Parenting approach:

- Mothers and fathers must work together to ensure the health and well being of their children, regardless of their romantic relationship, and
- The earlier the skills and techniques taught in the 50/50 Parenting Program are introduced to the fragile family the likelihood is increased that lasting relationships will be produced through marriage or co-parenting agreements.

Team Parenting recognizes that nevermarried parents – whether or not they are still a couple – may need support in working together for the health and well being of their children.



Types of Fragile Families

A fragile family is composed of an unmarried low-income mother, father and their children. Research has found that there are three types of fragile families; each differs according to their living arrangement and the status of their romantic relationship.

Parents in the first fragile family situation are frequently cohabiting and have little access to resources, such as relationship counseling and parenting courses. They may struggle to maintain their relationship in situations that are compounded by limited income, residing in impoverished communities, lack of family support systems and few marriages, which can be used as a model for their own relationship.

Those in the second fragile family situation conceived children and are in a romantic relationship, but are not cohabitating. They face the same problems as the first fragile family situation but must also manage child rearing from separate locations. This family situation requires a different set of skills to both maintain a romantic connection and effectively parent. These couples often must rely on themselves or friends and relatives in similar situations to determine how to keep the relationship together.

The third situation occurs when parents conceive children, are not cohabitating and are not interested in a romantic relationship. Their children often reside with the custodial parent (usually the mom) and have limited contact with the non-custodial parent (usually the dad), due to a number of factors, none of which are beneficial to the children.

The dangers of family dissolution increases when the parents who are in a fragile family have low educational attainment, poor work history or lack the skills to be gainfully employed.

Further contributing to the challenges experienced by fragile families is that many of these couples come from fatherless households and are simply repeating past behavior. These parents deserve the same level of consideration as those who are about to marry, because they may even consider marriage if they are given the same level of support provided in traditional pre-marital counseling.



What's Your Reaction?

In the video clip from the movie, "Save the Last Dance," is a scene depicting a fragile family situation. Dad has arrived to pick up his son for a visit. As the conversation evolves, mom and dad do not see eye-to-eye.

How would you describe the conflict?

What was important to mom? What was important to dad?

What suggestions might help this family?



"IALAC"

This is a story about Andre and one of his most prized possessions – his IALAC sign. When Andre was born, he was just like the rest of us. He came equipped with a sign called IALAC. IALAC stands for "I am Loveable and Capable." Because it was invisible, no one – not his parents, relatives or the doctor who delivered him knew it was there. Nevertheless, it was shiny and new and in the earliest days of Andre's life when his young mother and father (who were happy and in love) stroked him, kissed him and admired him, his IALAC sign actually grew a little bit larger and stronger every day.

The IALAC sign is an indication that children come into this world free of self-doubt, feelings of shame, inferiority or anything negative. They must learn those things from the people and the world around them. And so it began for Andre. At age three, Andre, his mom and dad did a lot of things together. They had fun on the playground and watched cartoons on Saturdays. One day at the playground he heard his mom and dad yelling at each other. Andre felt scared. He went over to give his dad a hug and his father pushed him away and told him to go back to the swings. His father's face looked so mean that Andre started to cry. His mom came over and hugged him but Andre still felt scared. (RIP) A very small piece of Andre's IALAC sign fell off. Andre didn't feel so loveable and capable at that moment.

When Andre was almost four, he overheard his mother, Mika, and his grandmother, Sarah, talking about his father. His grandmother said, "That Jessie ain't no good. He doesn't ever have any money. He can't even buy medicine when the boy is sick. You don't need that no good dog." Andre didn't understand exactly what his grandmother meant, but he could tell by her voice that she was mad at his daddy and that made Andre feel sad. Another piece of his IALAC sign broke off because Andre wanted his mom and grandmother to love his daddy like he did. (RIP)

On his fourth birthday, Andre heard his father at the door. He went running to the door, but his mother was there looking very mad. She and his daddy started to yell at each other. His mom said, "Where's the money you promised. I don't want to see that stupid toy you bought for his birthday. He needs clothes and food." Andre covered his ears and started back into his room. But not before he heard his father say, "You bitch. You can't keep me away from my son. I hate you." (RIP)



A few months later, Andre was visiting his father. They went to see a Disney movie. It was a good day with his dad. Then they went to a lady named Miss Kim's house for dinner. Andre didn't like the way that Miss Kim hugged and kissed his daddy. Andre told Miss Kim that her macaroni and cheese didn't taste as good as his mommy's. Miss Kim got mad and called his mommy a bad name. Andre's dad told him to eat and tell Miss Kim that her food was good. Andre told his dad that he wanted to go home to his mommy and his dad got real mad. It wasn't a good day anymore. (RIP)

A year later Andre started kindergarten. His mom called him her little man. He was growing up fast. She said, "Your daddy doesn't come over to see you like he should. He's no good. I know when you grow up, you will never be like him." Andre felt confused. He still loved his dad and wanted to spend time with him. Sometimes he thinks that his dad doesn't visit a lot because his mother and grandmother are so mean to him. Andre worries that they are driving him away. A week later his father called. Andre said, "Dad please come get me. I want to go with you." His dad promised he would come. Andre took his bath and got dressed. He waited and waited, but his dad never came. Andre kept waiting. Finally, his mom told him his dad wasn't coming. She asked if he wanted spaghetti, his favorite, for dinner. Andre said he wasn't hungry. His stomach hurt and his heart did too. (RIP)

When Andre was in second grade, he had gotten kind of used to not seeing his father much. It was no big deal. He started getting into trouble a lot at school. His teacher said he had a behavior problem. Nowadays his mother was always tired when she got home from work. She never laughed much anymore. Today after school his mom was screaming mad. She said the school called her at work and said they were expelling him for calling a little girl a bitch. Andre's mom yelled at him. "What do you know about calling somebody a bitch? This is awful. I don't know who you are. You are just like your no-good daddy. You're gonna grow up and break somebody's heart just like he broke mine. I can't take this anymore." Andre just stood there and acted like he didn't care. He had learned that this was the best way to deal with his mother when she started screaming. But inside he wondered, "Was his daddy no good? Does his daddy love him? Was he just like his dad?" A big piece of his IALAC sign cracked and fell off. (Final RIP)

When Andre was all grown up, his IALAC sign had done a lot of mending. Young people are very resilient. BUT there were some pieces that were gone FOREVER.



How has a situation like the one that Andre faced affected people in your community?



In the Best Interest of Children

According to author Isolina Ricci, children do best when:

- They are free to love both their parents without conflict of loyalty.
- They have access to both parents without fear of losing either.
- They can concentrate on growing up and developing on schedule without being sidetracked by parental conflict.
- They feel a sense of confidence and security.

Parents who have parted ways can act in their children's best interest by:

- Making them feel loved and wanted in each home,
- Finding a way to relate to each other that keeps the children out of their disagreements and bad feelings,
- Learning to manage any major conflicts or disputes with one another,
- · Supporting the other parent's relationship with their children and
- Allowing the children to have independent relationships with each parent.



Parents who are together romantically but live separately can have a "50/50" parenting relationship by:

- Making their children feel loved and wanted in each home.
- Keeping the lines of communication open with one another.
- Sharing decision-making about the child(ren).
- Taking steps to resolve any conflicts that arise in a healthy and constructive manner.
- Striving to be sure that both parents are involved in the child's day-today activities, daycare, schooling, health care, play activities and so on.
- Supporting the other parent's relationship with the child(ren).

*Adapted from *Mom's House, Dad's House: Making Two Homes for Your Child* by Isolina Ricci (New York: Fireside Books, 1997, p. 12)



The Need for 50/50 Parenting

In America, the traditional pattern of family formation followed a well-worn course. The couple met, a period of courtship followed, then marriage and finally they bore children. Even today's society supports the institution of marriage as throughout the country couples that decide to marry often receive pre-marital counseling that prepares them to manage the marriage relationship.

This counseling stresses communication, teamwork and conflict resolution while focusing on the practical issues of family life. In concept, pre-marital counseling lays a foundation for a long-term relationship that will yield an environment that will nurture the couple, the family and most importantly the children.

Even with this preparation, just about half of all marriages end in divorce. But, when a marriage fails, the process of separation and divorce is governed by both legal and social policy. This means that divorcing couples must develop parenting plans and visitation agreements to ensure the emotional stability of children who will no longer reside with both parents. When applied correctly, the plan helps prevent children from spiraling downward into poverty, losing contact with the non-resident parent and helps foster the children's identity and self-esteem.

However, for couples that have children out-of-wedlock there is no public policy that mandates that they negotiate visitation and agree on parenting. This becomes much more significant when the phenomenon of fragile families is understood.

What is a Fragile Family?

Fragile Families are low-income unwed mothers, fathers and their children. They are termed fragile because they are often poor and have higher risk of family dissolution.



The Why's and How's of Parenting Agreements

To Reduce Conflict -- Conflict usually gets reduced because both parties are required to think through the issues that are important to them. The activity of writing an agreement gets both father and mother focused on a constructive goal rather than pointing blame. As the two parties list what's important to each of them, they sometimes clear up misconceptions about the other parent's wishes or feelings. They also may find that they unexpectedly agree on some issues.

To Increase Fairness -- Once you start communicating what is really important to each of you, you will discover that some issues are more important to you than the other parent and vice versa. If something is more important to your child's mother than it is to you, then that is an area on which you might consider compromising. Likewise, if something is much more important to you than to her, she might consider compromising with you on that issue. Having a win/win attitude (the goal is having both people win) leads to an agreement that both of you will see as fair.

To Avoid Court -- By making decisions yourself, you can avoid having a judge do it for you. And if you decide to turn your parenting agreement into a legally binding custody and visitation order, the judge will happily create the legal order to fit with what the two of you have agreed on, unless it is not in the child's best interest for some reason.

To Create a Plan that Fits Your Unique Situation -- Since no two family situations are the same, it makes sense to create guidelines for raising your children that are specific to your situation. When judges or mediators make custody decisions, they typically use model agreements or a one-size-fits-all approach that might work for many people but may not work best in your situation. When you write your own agreement you can take into consideration any special needs that your child has and any special circumstances within the family.

^{*}Based on information from *Child Custody Made Simple: Understanding the Laws of Child Custody and Child Support* by Webster Watnik (Claremont, CA: Single Parent Press, 2000)



Planning for Change

"Wisdom is knowledge rightly applied."

Turn the skills and knowledge learned in this workshop into wisdom by applying the learning in your work and/or life. What is it you will do differently or more effectively going forward? In your own words, formulate a plan to enable you and/or your organization to accomplish your goal(s) and better serve your clients/customers.

GOAL (results to be achieved):				
•			e goal include: tive tasks and activities.)	
Deadline:			Prepared by:	
	П	Share with		





Additional Resources and Materials

Research and Resources, *Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network,* "Connecting Low-Income Fathers and Families: A Guide to Practical Policies" – National Conference of State Legislatures, http://www.calib.com/peerta/policies/connect.htm.

Carkhuff, Robert R., *The Art of Helping*, 1983, Human Resource Development Press, Inc., Amherst, Massachusetts, (413) 253-3488.

Enhancing Motivation for Change in Substance Abuse Treatment, TIP Series 35, Reprinted 2002, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Publication BKD342, www.samhsa.gov, (800) 720-6686.

Blakenhorn, David (1995), *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem*, New York: Basic Books/Harper Collins.

Eberly, D. (2001), Confronting Father Absence: A Guide to Renewing Fatherhood in Your Community: National Fatherhood Initiative.

Horn, W.F. and Sylvester, T. (2002), *Father Facts*, 4th Edition, Maryland: National Fatherhood Initiative.

Reich, K. and Sylvester, K. (2002), *Making Fathers Count: Assessing the Progress of Responsible Fatherhood Efforts*, Baltimore: Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Social Policy Action Network.





The Fatherhood Field: A Brief History

1975

January 4: President Gerald Ford signs into law the Social Services Amendments of 1974, requiring states to establish child support programs that provide services to welfare families and may provide services to non-welfare families. States must attempt to locate absent parents, establish paternity, determine child support orders and enforce payment awards. The legislation results from congressional concern that lack of support from fathers forces families to unnecessarily rely on welfare.

Also that year...

In his literature review entitled *Fathers: Forgotten Contributors to Child Development*, Dr. Michael Lamb asserts that the father's main role is a socialization role, introducing the child to the world beyond the home.

In his Ford Foundation-supported book, *Who Will Raise the Children? New Options for Fathers (and Mothers)*, Dr. James Levine examines barriers to father involvement that are deeply ingrained in American culture, law, social structures and research traditions. He calls for changes to enhance father involvement, provide equal employment opportunities for women and ensure positive outcomes for children. The book wins the Family Life Book Award of the Child Study Association of America and leads Levine to seek funding to establish The Fatherhood Project®.

1976

April-July: The U.S. Census Bureau collects first national data on divorce, child custody and child support. The Bureau will publish its first report on this data in June 1979.

1979

April: The U.S. Census Bureau, along with the Office of Child Support Enforcement, begins the regular biannual collection of national data on child support and alimony.

1981

Dr. James Levine founds The Fatherhood Project® at Bank Street College of Education in New York City, with Dr. Michael Lamb and Dr. Joseph Pleck as associate directors. With support from the Ford Foundation and others, The Fatherhood Project® serves as a national research, demonstration and dissemination project to identify, test and promote best practices for supporting the involvement of fathers in the lives of children.



1982

Charles Ballard founds the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, six years after he first began working with non-custodial fathers in Cleveland as part of a hospital outreach program. The Institute pioneers an intensive, one-on-one approach toward connecting fathers with families, with all of its programs headed by couples who model marriage in their own communities.

1983

November 10: U.S. Representative Patricia Schroeder of Colorado holds the "Paternal Absence and Fathers' Roles" hearing in the House of Representatives. Dr. James Levine and Dr. Debra Klinman provide testimony from The Fatherhood Project[®].

Also that year...

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) funds research efforts to collect data from both mothers and fathers about divorce, child support and fathers' involvement with their children.

1984

The Fatherhood Project[®] publishes *Fatherhood USA: The First National Guide to Programs, Services and Resources for and about Fathers,* by Dr. Debra Klinman and Dr. Rhiana Kohl. In conjunction with the book, The Fatherhood Project[®] hosts a forum in New York City, which brings together 400 service providers and parents. The forum is replicated in six cities in 1985 and extended to 10 cities from 1986 to 1988. Gary Bauer, a member of President Ronald Reagan's staff, hosts a White House meeting on creating strong communities. The meeting includes a special emphasis on fathers.

Dr. James Dobson, founder and president of Focus on the Family, produces *Where's Dad?*. The film series challenges men to spend more time with their children.

The federal Child Support Amendments require states to withhold child support from paychecks of delinquent non-custodial parents and to develop legislative guidelines for determining child support orders.

1985

The National Urban League begins its Male Responsibility Project with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Ed Pitt directs the project, which focuses both on adolescent pregnancy prevention and on responsible fatherhood issues. The Male Responsibility Project leads to national conferences in 1988 and 1989 and spawns 60 local programs at Urban League affiliates nationwide.



With funding from the Ford Foundation and others, associates of The Fatherhood Project® implement the Teen Father Project and, subsequently, the Adolescent Family Life Collaboration. Carried out in six cities, these demonstrations lead programs serving teen mothers to reach out to teen fathers and later to the extended families of both teen mothers and fathers. The project continues until 1989.

The Kindering Center establishes the National Fathers Network, an organization that supports fathers raising children with special needs.

1986

HHS and the Family Impact Seminar hold a one-day seminar on young unwed fathers at Catholic University. The seminar serves as the basis for a 1988 report by Jacqueline Smollar and Theodora Ooms, Young Unwed Fathers: Research Review, Policy Dilemmas and Options, as well as a 1993 book by Theodora Ooms and Dr. Robert Lerman, Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies, published by Temple University Press.

1987

Dr. William Julius Wilson's, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, The Underclass and Public Policy* is published by the University of Chicago Press. The book focuses public attention on the link between unemployment and family breakdown by advancing the thesis that the lack of employment opportunities for African-Americans in the inner city makes low-income men "unmarriageable."

1988

The U.S. Congress enacts the Family Support Act. The law strengthens paternity establishment, presumptive child support, and paycheck withholding procedures. FSA affects low-income families by enacting changes to the welfare system and placing an increased emphasis on work. It also includes the first pilot projects to help unemployed fathers find jobs and pay child support: Parents' Fair Share and the Young Unwed Fathers Project.

Greg Bishop founds Boot Camp for New Dads, a hospital-based program that uses experienced fathers to coach new fathers on parenting techniques. By 2000, these programs are operating in nearly 40 states.

1989

The Urban Institute Press publishes Dr. Sara McLanahan's and Dr. Irwin Garfinkel's Single Mothers and Their Children: A New American Dilemma, which details the declining standards of living for divorced and never-married families.



Dr. Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee write *Second Chances: Men, Women and Children a Decade After Divorce*, published by Houghton Mifflin. Their research documents that children who grow up without fathers are more likely to need psychiatric care.

Dr. James Levine relocates The Fatherhood Project® from Bank Street College of Education to the newly formed Families and Work Institute, and initiates a new line of research on working fathers. Two years later, Ed Pitt joins The Fatherhood Project as associate director.

1990

The Philadelphia Children's Network is founded under the leadership of Ralph Smith; the organization focuses its work on father involvement as a means for improving children's life chances.

Dr. Ken Canfield founds the National Center for Fathering to educate the public about the problem of father absence and to develop methods for improving fathering skills. By 2000, the Center reports that it has 170,000 members and over 200,000 men have attended Center-sponsored training sessions.

Minnesota Early Learning Development, which sponsors parenting support groups nationwide, develops a new curriculum specifically for young fathers ages 15 to 25. Over the next 10 years, more than 20 communities across the nation launch MELD for Young Dads programs.

1991

June 11: U.S. Representative Patricia Schroeder holds congressional hearings entitled "Babies and Briefcases: Creating a Family-Friendly Workplace for Fathers." Among those testifying is Dr. James Levine.

Also that year...

Beyond Rhetoric, the final report of the National Commission on Children, emphasizes the importance of two-parent families and identifies father absence as a significant social problem.

Dr. Louis Sullivan, then Secretary of HHS, begins a national male-involvement initiative, including grants to Head Start agencies to increase outreach to fathers.

The African-American Men and Boys Initiative (AAMB), an initiative of the Kellogg Foundation, is launched under the leadership of Dr. Bobby Austin. Kellogg spends \$11 million on the initiative, funding 32 model projects across the nation aimed at improving opportunities for at-risk African-American men and boys.



The foundation also establishes a National Task Force on African-American Men and Boys, chaired by civil rights leader Andrew J. Young.

Public/Private Ventures launches its Young Unwed Fathers pilot project at six sites. The project, which lasts for two years, focuses on paternity establishment and giving young fathers the resources and opportunities they need to be good parents and support their children.

Dr. Jeffery Johnson and Pam Wilson create the first fatherhood development curriculum for Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC).

The National Center for Fathering inaugurates its annual fatherhood essay contest. In the next decade, 350,000 children in seven states compete in the contest, writing essays for local newspapers about what their fathers mean to them.

Dr. Frank Furstenberg of the University of Pennsylvania and Dr. Andrew Cherlin of Johns Hopkins University write *Divided Families: What Happens to Children When Parents Part*, published by Harvard University Press. Their research includes the finding that 40 percent of children in father-absent homes had not seen their fathers at all in the previous year; only one in six children saw their fathers an average of once a week or more.

1992

MDRC begins evaluating the Parents' Fair Share service model. A seven-site demonstration project begins two years later and continues until 1997. A large consortium of funders – including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation – support the demonstration.

Vice President Dan Quayle criticizes the television program *Murphy Brown* for portraying the lead character as a willing single mother.

The National Center for Fathering commissions the first national poll about the public's attitudes towards fathering and publishes *The Seven Secrets of Effective Fathers*. The book sells over 150,000 copies and is translated into 10 languages.

Democratic Presidential candidate Bill Clinton promises to "end welfare as we know it," in part by encouraging men to take responsibility for their families.



1993

Dr. Barbara Dafoe Whitehead writes "Dan Quayle Was Right" for the Atlantic Monthly.

The Philadelphia Children's Network and the Center for the Study of Social Policy convene a roundtable on African-American fathers. The roundtable leads to the publication in 1994 of *World Without Work: The Causes and Consequences of Black Male Joblessness*, by Ralph Smith and Tom Joe.

Joe Jones begins working with low-income new and expectant fathers as part of the Baltimore City Healthy Start Initiative. His work, which ultimately grows into the Center for Fathers, Families and Workforce Development, focuses on helping low-income fathers connect with their children, maintain positive relationships with their children's mothers and find stable employment.

The U.S. Congress requires states to allow unwed fathers to voluntarily declare their paternity in hospitals.

The National Academy of Sciences holds a workshop that leads to a report, *America's Fathers and Public Policy*. The report describes the diversity of father involvement in the United States, identifies obstacles and incentives to father involvement, discusses how public policy can affect these obstacles and incentives and suggests further directions for research.

The Fatherhood Project[®] publishes *Getting Men Involved: Strategies for Early Childhood Programs* and launches a national early childhood training program concentrating on low-income communities.

Richard Louv writes *FatherLove*, which describes a multi-dimensional picture of fathers – including their roles as breadwinners, nurturers and community builders – and offers ideas for policies that would help men fulfill all of these roles. Louv's presentation at Vice President Al Gore's Family

Re-Union in 1993 lays the groundwork for the next year's Family Re-Union on the role of men in children's lives.

Judge David Gray Ross is appointed to head the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement. During Ross' seven-year tenure, the office broadens its mission to include father involvement as a goal.

Dr. Ronald Mincy joins the Ford Foundation.



1994

March 7: Don Eberly and Dr. Wade F. Horn found the National Fatherhood Initiative, with the goal of stimulating a broad-based movement to restore fatherhood as a national priority. NFI's activities focus on raising public awareness and promoting responsible fatherhood initiatives at the state and local level.

July 1: The National Center on Fathers and Families is established at the University of Pennsylvania, with core funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Ralph Smith is the founding director; later that year, Dr. Vivian Gadsden becomes director. NCOFF focuses on expanding fatherhood research within family studies and building a relationship between research and practice that results in better policymaking.

July 10: The Philadelphia Children's Network and the NCOFF convene a Practitioners Roundtable before the third Family Re-Union conference. In attendance are practitioners and program administrators who discuss ways to strengthen the field. These discussions lead to the creation of the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families (NPNFF) in 1995.

July 11: The third annual Family Re-Union Conference, sponsored by Vice President and Mrs. Gore, focuses on "The Role of Men in Children's Lives." As a result, the Children, Youth and Family Consortium of the University of Minnesota establishes Fathernet, an online resource for fathers, and Father-to-Father, a mentoring program that moves to the National Center for Fathering in 1999.

October 27: NFI hosts a national summit on fatherhood in Dallas, with more than 250 attendees.

Also that year...

Ralph Smith joins the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The Ford Foundation launches the Strengthening Fragile Families Initiative – a coordinated effort to promote research, policy development and practice – aimed at helping low-income, unwed parents to effectively parent their children. As part of the initiative, the foundation issues grants to the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, the Urban Institute, Columbia University and Princeton University for participation in the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study.

Dr. Sara McLanahan and Dr. Gary Sandefur write *Growing Up With a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps*, published by Harvard University Press.

Public/Private Ventures publishes *Young Unwed Fathers: Report from the Field* by Mary Achatz and Crystal A. MacAllum, one of the first reports to include evaluation results from a fatherhood pilot project.



1995

March: NFI publishes *Father Facts*, a comprehensive collection of statistics on fatherhood and the consequences of father absence on child well-being. By May 2000, *Father Facts* is in its third edition with nearly 100,000 copies in print.

April: The annual *KIDS COUNT* report of the Annie E. Casey Foundation focuses on father absence and its negative effects on child well-being.

June 16: President Clinton issues an Executive Memorandum urging federal agencies to focus on fatherhood issues.

June 18: Numerous Father's Day celebrations and conferences are held, including "The Role of Men in Children's Lives" at the White House, the

"Focus on Fathers Summit" convened by California Governor Pete Wilson and "The State of Fatherhood in America" symposium sponsored by the Institute for American Values.

Also that year...

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and Danforth Foundation create a funders' collaborative to support capacity-building, public awareness, policy research, program demonstration, and technical assistance in the fatherhood field.

The National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families is founded with core support from the fatherhood funders' collaborative, and is based at The Fatherhood Project. NPNFF is the first membership organization to represent and offer technical assistance to social service providers that focus on fathers. The project is later based at the National Center for Strategic Planning and Nonprofit Leadership (NPCL).

NFI receives a commitment from the Ad Council for a national public-awareness campaign on the importance of fathers. That campaign begins in 1996 and continues today, generating over \$100 million in donated television and radio airtime.

The Center on Fathers, Families and Public Policy (CFFPP) is founded with core funding from the Ford Foundation. The Center's work focuses on policy research, training, technical assistance and public education about the barriers facing low-income, never-married fathers and their families.

The Families and Work Institute publishes *New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood* by Dr. James Levine and Edward Pitt. It is the first best practices guide for responsible fatherhood programs.



The Nation of Islam sponsors the Million Man March in Washington, DC. The march focuses not only on ending racism, but also on encouraging black men to be good husbands, fathers and contributors to their communities. Hundreds of thousands attend the march.

Colorado Governor Roy Romer appoints a task force on responsible fatherhood.

NFI and the Washington Family Council sponsor nationwide public service announcements about the importance of fathers. The campaign features General Colin Powell, former NFL star and U.S. Representative Steve Largent of Oklahoma and other celebrities.

The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics identifies the lack of research on fatherhood as a major issue and launches a public/private partnership to identify gaps in the research.

The Family Impact Seminar hosts a policy seminar about fatherhood on Capitol Hill, which leads to the report *Disconnected Dads: Strategies for Promoting Responsible Fatherhood*, by Theodora Ooms, Elena Cohen and John Hutchins.

In collaboration with NCOFF, the Institute for Mental Health Initiatives convenes a conference for members of the media, entitled "Fathers and Families in Focus: Exposing Stereotypes and Myths."

David Blankenhorn, director of the Institute for American Values, writes *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem*, published by Basic Books. Blankenhorn argues that, in seeking to redefine fatherhood in the wake of the sexual revolution, American society has inadvertently diminished fathers, leading to a decline in child well-being and a rise in social problems such as crime, domestic violence and child abuse.

NCOFF publishes the first issue of the NCOFF FatherLit Research Database, which is subsequently published online and on CD-ROM with almost 9,000 abstracts of research on father involvement.

NCOFF also establishes the Fathers and Families Roundtable Series, meetings of researchers, practitioners and policymakers to identify issues and guide research studies in the field. The Roundtable Series helps launch NCOFF's research report series, which begins with seven literature reviews by prominent scholars and provides a context for research efforts in the field.



1996

January: In collaboration with Radio America, NFI launches a series of public service radio announcements that feature politicians from both political parties talking about responsible fatherhood.

February: Virginia Governor George Allen, in collaboration with NFI, launches the Virginia Fatherhood Campaign, the first statewide fatherhood initiative in the country.

May 3: President Clinton's Domestic Policy Council, in collaboration with NCOFF, the National Performance Review (NPR) and HHS, convenes a conference of federal agencies to discuss how they can change policies and practices to promote responsible fatherhood.

June: NFI hosts an interfaith conference on fatherhood promotion in Washington, DC, with more than 60 religious leaders attending.

With support from NFI, the U.S. House of Representatives forms a bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Fatherhood to examine the issue of fatherlessness and its role in public policy. The U.S. Senate later follows suit.

USA TODAY runs a special Father's Day issue where photos and articles about fathers are featured on the front page of every section.

NFI, the Institute for American Values and the Center of the American Experiment release *A Call to Fatherhood*, signed by a group of 40 fatherhood advocates and religious leaders.

August 22: President Clinton signs the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act into law, which replaces the Family Support Act of 1988 and creates a new time-limited welfare system that emphasizes work. PRWORA creates new block grants to states for public assistance to families in poverty, including aid to non-custodial parents. The law's provisions profoundly affect fathers by toughening child support enforcement policies and providing grants to states to improve access and visitation for non-custodial parents.

October: NFI, the Institute for American Values and the Center of the American Experiment sponsor a conference in Minneapolis to set a fatherhood agenda.

Also that year...

The National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership is founded. NPCL focuses on strengthening the management and capacity of community-based organizations that work on family issues.



A Gallup poll sponsored by the National Center for Fathering finds that 79 percent of respondents say the nation's most significant family or social problem is father absence.

The Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth (CCFY) and the funders' collaborative initiate community-wide fatherhood events in 25 communities across the nation.

The Florida legislature establishes a statewide Responsible Fatherhood Commission.

The Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Program adds a major father studies component to its activities.

The Council of Governors' Policy Advisors publishes Seven Things States Can Do to Promote Responsible Fatherhood, by Dr. Wade F. Horn and Eric Brenner.

Dr. William Julius Wilson writes *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*, published by Vintage Press. The book marks a continuation of Wilson's research on the links between unemployment and family breakdown.

Dr. Robert Hamrin founds Great Dads, which runs seminars for fathers who want to be more involved in their children's lives.

Dr. Ken Canfield writes *The Heart of a Father*, published by Northfield Publishing.

1997

August 5: Congress enacts the Welfare-to-Work block grant, which includes the first funding source specifically targeted to help low-income, non-custodial fathers find jobs.

November: Lorin Harris joins the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

Also that year...

The HHS Office of Child Support Enforcement funds eight responsible fatherhood demonstration projects.

The Illinois Fatherhood Initiative is founded by David Hirsch. Led entirely by volunteers, IFI begins sponsoring essay contests, events and public-awareness activities to promote responsible fatherhood and help men become better fathers.

The National Center on Children in Poverty (NCCP) publishes *Map and Track: State Initiatives to Promote Responsible Fatherhood*, the first publication to detail state efforts to promote responsible fatherhood efforts.



The Promise Keepers, a faith-based movement to encourage marriage and father involvement, stages a rally in Washington, DC, after three years of similar rallies are held across the nation. Hundreds of thousands of men attend.

The Hudson Institute publishes *Fathers, Marriage and Welfare Reform*, by Dr. Wade F. Horn and Andrew Bush. The report recommends ending preferences for single-parent families when determining welfare benefits, more employment services for low-income men and a new focus on improving the parenting skills of at-risk families. The report also calls on government to grant preferences to married families for "limited supply" benefits such as Head Start enrollment, public housing, financial aid in educationand job training.

PBS airs *Fatherhood USA*, a two-hour documentary produced by The Fatherhood Project[®].

The Fatherhood Project® publishes Working Fathers: New Strategies for Balancing Work and Family.

NCOFF establishes the State Policy Series, which brings together state officials to build coherent fatherhood efforts in states and to expose state officials to fatherhood programs and relevant research. Partner organizations include the National Governors' Association (NGA), the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the NPNFF.

1998

February: NGA forms the Governors' Task Force on Fatherhood Promotion, a bipartisan effort chaired by Governors Tom Carper of Delaware and Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania.

March: U.S. Representative Clay Shaw, Jr., of Florida introduces the first Fathers Count bill, which proposes a \$2 billion block grant for states to promote responsible fatherhood. The bill dies in committee.

April: Baseline interviews begin for the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study, a five-year study that will provide detailed, nationally representative data on unmarried, low-income parents.

June: The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics releases Nurturing Fatherhood: Improving Data and Research on Male Fertility, Family Formation and Fatherhood. The report summarizes existing data and identifies areas where further research is needed.



NFI hosts its second National Summit on Fatherhood in Washington, DC, with 500 attendees.

August: NPNFF sponsors its first regional forum in Atlanta.

September: MDRC releases interim findings from the Parents' Fair Share demonstration that disappoint many observers; across all seven sites, the program did not significantly raise men's earnings or increase their employment. However, child support collections increased somewhat, though fathers' incomes did not. Three program sites showed some success in raising employment rates and earnings.

November: Morehouse College and the Institute for American Values sponsor a three-day conference, "African-American Fathers and Their Families in the 21st Century," which brings together scholars and advocates from across the political spectrum to develop a plan for promoting father involvement among black males.

Preston Garrison is hired as NPNFF's first executive director.

December: NCOFF begins the second tier of the Fathers and Families Roundtable Series. Meeting topics include welfare reform, poverty and social vulnerability, fathering and family processes, child well-being, fathering indicators and measurement, family development and issues of race and culture.

Also that year...

Bienvenidos Family Services and the National Compadres Network found the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, directed by Jerry Tello. NLFFI seeks to help Latino fathers become more active in the nurturing and education of their children.

The NGA Human Services Committee devotes its winter meeting to state programs that promote responsible fatherhood; seventeen governors attend. NGA also releases *Promoting Responsible Fatherhood*, a guide to best practices for fatherhood programs, by David Brown and Nolan Jones.

Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson, in collaboration with NFI, launches the Wisconsin Fatherhood Initiative.

In Texas, The Hogg Foundation and the Center for Public Policy Priorities launch the Texas Fragile Families Initiative, a multi-site public/private partnership to help community-based organizations serve young non-custodial fathers.

The Sisters of Charity Foundation in South Carolina commits \$6 million over six years to community programs to strengthen the role of fathers in families.



The Russell Sage Foundation publishes *Fathers Under Fire: The Revolution in Child Support Enforcement*, edited by Dr. Irwin Garfinkel, Dr. Sara McLanahan, Daniel Meyer and Judith Seltzer. The book suggests that low-income fathers are subject to harsher child support enforcement measures than other fathers and that their child support obligations are disproportionately high.

NCOFF establishes the Family Development Study Group, which includes teams of researchers, practitioners, policymakers and policy analysts.

1999

January: The Partners for Fragile Families Project announces selection of demonstration sites for its program to involve low-income, non-custodial fathers in their children's lives.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities publishes *Developing Innovative Child Support Demonstrations for Non-Custodial Parents*, by Wendell Primus.

February: The Father-to-Father initiative's administrative home for technical assistance is housed at the National Center for Fathering.

March: HHS launches the nationwide public-awareness campaign "They're Your Kids. Be Their Dad."

NFI releases *Fatherhood and Television*, the first analysis of the portrayal of fatherhood on network television, and finds that fathers are often absent in primetime programming. And when fathers are recurring characters, they are generally portrayed as uninvolved, incompetent or both.

June: NFI and the Mayors' Task Force on Fatherhood Promotion host the National Summit on Supporting Urban Fathers in Washington, DC.

July: The NCCP releases the second edition of *Map and Track: State Initiatives to Promote Responsible Fatherhood.* The report finds that in the two years since the first report, states have not significantly improved or expanded their responsible fatherhood efforts.

July 14: U.S. Senators Evan Bayh of Indiana and Pete Domenici of New Mexico introduce The Responsible Fatherhood Act of 1999. The bill seeks to create a \$50 million annual block grant to states to promote responsible fatherhood and marriage, increase the child support pass-through, establish a \$25 million annual challenge-grant program for fatherhood public-awareness campaigns and establish a national fatherhood clearinghouse. The bill attracts 17 bipartisan cosponsors but dies in committee.



September: NPNFF becomes a fully independent organization and holds its first annual membership meeting.

U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut and 24 other senators sponsor a resolution encouraging greater involvement of fathers in their children's lives. The largely symbolic resolution passes the Senate unanimously.

NFI publishes Ten Things Mayors Can Do to Promote Responsible Fatherhood.

NCSL creates the Advisory Committee on Responsible Fatherhood – the only national advisory committee to look at the issue of fatherhood from a state and federal policy context. The Advisory Committee also was the only national committee to convene all the stakeholders – legislative and executive branch leaders, researchers, advocates and practitioners – for the purpose of developing policy guidance for state policy makers.

October 14: U.S. Representative Nancy Johnson of Connecticut introduces a limited version of the Fathers Count bill, cosponsored by a bipartisan group of 14 representatives. The bill provides \$155 million in competitive grants to promote marriage and responsible fatherhood.

October 28: The Fathers Matter! teleconference is hosted by U.S. Department of Education Secretary Richard Riley and HHS Secretary Donna Shalala.

November 10: The Fathers Count bill passes the House of Representatives by a strongly bipartisan 328-to-93 margin. The bill dies in the Senate. Most fatherhood groups supported the bill, but the bill draws opposition from the National Organization for Women (NOW), which charges that the bill's emphasis on marriage would encourage women to stay in abusive relationships.

November 29: Congress and the President enact changes to the Welfare-to-Work block grant that make it easier for states to offer job training and placement services to low-income, non-custodial fathers.

December: The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization receives a second Welfare-to-Work competitive grant because of its success in helping hard-to-employ parents obtain full-time, unsubsidized employment.

NFI publishes *The Faith Factor in Fatherhood: Renewing the Sacred Vocation of Fatherhood*, a collection of essays edited by Don Eberly. The book urges faith communities to promote responsible fatherhood through instruction, rites-of-passage programs, stories, ceremonies, mentoring and community outreach.

December 1-3: NPNFF sponsors the Midwest Regional Conference in Minneapolis.



Also that year...

North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt and Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge launch fatherhood initiatives in their states. Ridge collaborates with NFI in establishing Pennsylvania's initiative.

NCSL publishes *Broke but Not Deadbeat*, a handbook for states on responsible fatherhood programs, by Dana Reichert.

The Fatherhood Movement: A Call to Action, a collection of essays edited by Dr. Wade F. Horn, David Blankenhorn and Dr. Mitchell B. Pearlstein, is published by Lexington Books.

MDRC publishes Fathers' Fair Share: Helping Poor Men Manage Child Support and Fatherhood, by Dr. Earl S. Johnson, Ann Levine and Dr. Fred Doolittle. The book summarizes the findings of the Parents' Fair Share pilot project and argues that, in spite of their limited resources, low-income non-resident fathers are more likely to make stronger efforts to improve child support payments and to become greater participants in their children's lives if they encounter a less adversarial and arbitrary enforcement system.

Paula Roberts of the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) writes *Setting Support When the Non-Custodial Parent is Low-Income*, and her colleague Vicki Turetsky testifies before Congress about how the federal government and states can make the child support system friendlier to low-income fathers.

Dr. Elaine Sorenson of the Urban Institute writes *Obligating Dads: Helping Low Income Noncustodial Fathers Do More for Their Children.* The report offers advice on how states can reach out to low-income, non-custodial fathers.

The Fatherhood Project® begins a Mott Foundation-supported study of the work/family needs of working poor fathers and of public and private initiatives to assist them.

2000

January 16: Vice President Gore, as part of his presidential campaign platform, proposes a series of new government programs and initiatives to promote responsible fatherhood.

January 26: President Clinton announces the Fathers Work/Families Win initiative and other responsible fatherhood proposals as part of his fiscal year 2001 budget.

January 27: The White House announces that child support collections in fiscal year 1999 amounted to \$15.5 billion, up from \$8 billion in 1992.



March 29: HHS grants waivers to the 10 states with Partners for Fragile Families sites, augmenting foundation funding with federal matching funds from the Office of Child Support Enforcement.

June: NCSL publishes Connecting Low-Income Fathers and Families: A Guide to Practical Policies, with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

June 2-3: NFI hosts its third National Summit on Fatherhood in Washington, DC. Vice President Gore addresses the gathering; Governor George W. Bush participates by videoconference.

June 15: U.S. Representative Nancy Johnson introduces the Child Support Distribution Act of 2000, which would make it easier for states to forgive child support debt owed to the state and would encourage states to reinstate child support pass-throughs for families on welfare. The bill incorporates the fatherhood grants program approved by the House of Representatives under the 1999 Fathers Count bill. The bill garners support from a wide range of interest groups, including women's groups such as the National Women's Law Center (NWLC).

June 16: President Clinton devotes his Saturday radio address to Father's Day and directs federal agencies to reach out to state and local governments, community providers and families to let them know about federal resources available to promote responsible fatherhood.

June-July: The U.S. Department of Education produces Role of Men in Children's Learning, and HHS produces Role of Non-Custodial Fathers Tip Guide.

July: The Texas Fragile Families Initiative (TFF) launches 12 community-based fatherhood programs across the state of Texas beginning a three-year demonstration project funded through the collaboration of more than 25 private foundations with partnership support from public agency directors in Child Support, Child Protective Services, the Department of Health and Juvenile Justice.

September: The Social Policy Action Network (SPAN) publishes Restoring Fathers to Families and Communities: Six Steps for Policymakers, with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

September 7: The Child Support Distribution Act passes the House of Representatives on a vote of 405 to 18. U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe of Maine introduces a similar bill in the Senate in October, but both bills fail to pass before the conclusion of the 106th Congress in December.



September 13-15: NPNFF and the Family and Corrections Network (FCN) co-sponsor the first North American Conference on Fathers Behind Bars and on the Street.

November: NFI releases the second Fatherhood and Television study. This study, focusing only on network shows that include a father and/or mother as recurring characters, finds that fathers are eight times more likely to be portrayed negatively compared to mothers. The report also notes that the majority of television fathers are married to the mothers of their children.

Also that year...

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation launches the three-year, six-site Fathers At Work demonstration project, which aims to increase labor market participation, earnings, and parental involvement among low-income, non-custodial fathers under age 30. Senior Program Officer Dr. Ronald B. Mincy, architect of the Strengthening Fragile Families Initiative, leaves the Ford Foundation for Columbia University.

As part of his presidential campaign platform, Governor George W. Bush promises to provide \$200 million in competitive grants over five years to community and faith-based organizations for fatherhood initiatives. His goals include promoting responsible fatherhood, combating father absence and conducting marriage education courses that teach conflict resolution.

Postscript: In 2001, President Bush includes in his budget \$315 million for fatherhood programs, with \$64 million approved for 2002, including \$4 million to expand state and local responsible programs. He additionally proposes that \$100 million be set aside for states to explore ways of reducing out-of-wedlock births by encouraging marriage in low-income and welfare families. Finally, the President proposes significant child support reforms that include granting states the option of giving former welfare families a full pass through of child support payments and supplying federal funding matches that could increase welfare families'incomes by as much as \$100 per month.

Special thanks to Eric Brenner of the Illinois governor's office, who compiled a draft timeline in 1998 that served as a basis for this chronology. Thanks also to the numerous fatherhood leaders who reviewed this document and added their own suggestions: Dr. Ken Canfield, Dr. Vivian Gadsden, Preston Garrison, Lorin Harris, Terry Holdren, Dr. Wade F. Horn, Dr. James Levine, Linda Mellgren, Dr. Ronald Mincy, Ellen Pagliaro, Edward Pitt and Dana Reichert.

